



**Arkansas
Department of
Human Services**

**Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive
Systems Initiative (AECCS)**



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF

Health

Keeping Your Hometown Healthy

**“Building Bridges----
From Birth To School”**



Early Care and Education Work Group

Research has pointed time and time again to the importance of quality early experiences for children. Arkansas is facing a pivotal moment in setting direction for the public education of its youngest children. State agencies, families and community stakeholders entrusted to educate young children need reliable data that will enable them to monitor child outcomes and determine where intervention and improvements are necessary.

Purpose:

The Early Care and Education Work Group (through the work of the School Readiness Indicators Initiative) has developed a list of school readiness indicators organized around four dynamic areas: **Ready Children, Ready School, Ready Families/Economic Well-Being, and Ready Communities**. Data will be tracked yearly based on all determined indicators. The work group will study the interactions and overlap between the four areas in order to design a systemic plan that will positively affect outcomes for young children and families.

Membership:

The Early Care and Education Work Group brings together child care professionals, higher education, early intervention, parent education, community health centers, health department, the faith community, family representatives (parents, grandparents), recreation, local business concerns, government agency staff and advocacy organizations.

Key Work Group Objectives:

- Track data yearly from pre-determined school readiness indicators.
- Implement kindergarten assessment across the state in order to track progress and recommend appropriate plan for interventions.
- Provide expanded professional development opportunities to early childhood professionals, thereby assuring a highly skilled early childhood workforce for Arkansas’ children and families.
- Increase the capacity for high quality child care, especially for at-risk children, including infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and children and who are English language learners.
- Promote standards of quality that ensure a safe and healthy early care environment.
- Provide and develop opportunities that utilize early care and education settings to link families with other care systems, including health care, family support, and parent education.

For More information contact co-chairs Sandra Reifeiss sreifeiss@arkedu.k12.ar.us, Vicki Shelby vshelby@paragould.k12.ar.us or Martha Reeder, Project Director martha.reeder@arkansas.gov (501-683-4601).